Below the Line: The Tobacco Industry and Youth Smoking

WA Tobacco Document Searching Program

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Introduction

• Master Settlement Agreement (MSA)
• Published work
• WATDSP advocacy:
  – Submission for tobacco products control amendment bill.
  – Submission for plain packaging bill
  – WA and the international tobacco industry monograph
Methods

• Document archives:
  - Legacy Tobacco Documents Library

• Keywords:
  - Youth smoking prevention, education, retailers, youth advertising, youth marketing

• Results:
  - tobacco industry youth smoking prevention (YSP) programs
    • access (retailer) “It’s the Law”
    • education “I’ve Got the Power”
  - other marketing strategies
    • fashion and music
    • movies and video games
Thus, an attempt to reach young smokers, starters should be based, among others, on the following major parameters:

-- Present the cigarette as one of a few initiations into the adult world.

-- Present the cigarette as a part of the illicit pleasure category of products and activities.

-- In your ads create a situation taken from the day-to-day life of the young smoker but in an elegant manner have this situation touch on the basic symbols of the growing-up, maturity process.

-- To the best of your ability, (considering some legal constraints), relate the cigarette to "pot", wine, beer, sex, etc.

(Brown & Williamson, 1975)
Industry Agenda for YSP

“Doesn’t look like “advertising”” (Philip Morris, 2001)

- Corporate responsibility – improve corporate image
- Deflect attention away from the industry
- Opposing:
  - Legislation
  - Taxation
  - Advertising restrictions
  - Opposing health warnings
  - Constraints on smoking
Contradictory Stance

“Isn't this just about improving your company's image and credibility?

No, it is about our commitment to helping reduce the incidence of youth smoking. We are deeply committed to making a difference on this issue”.

(Philip Morris CEO Issues Book, 2000)

“How can we make this credible?
Youth Smoking Prevention Program
Retail and marketing initiatives that go above and beyond what's required per the MSA”.

(Roper Organisation, 2001)
The youth program and its individual parts support the Institute's objective of discouraging unfair and counterproductive federal, state and local restrictions on cigarette advertising, by:

- Providing on-going and persuasive evidence that the industry is actively discouraging youth smoking and independent verification that the industry's efforts are valid.

- Reinforcing the belief that peer pressure -- not advertising -- is the cause of youth smoking.

- Seizing the political center and forcing the anti-smokers to an extreme (as happened when the antis attacked the industry at the time of the launch.)

The strategy is fairly simple:

1. Heavily promote industry opposition to youth smoking.

2. Align industry with broader, more sophisticated view of the problem, i.e. parental inability to offset peer pressure.

3. Work with and through credible child welfare professionals and educators to tackle the "problem."

4. Bait anti-tobacco forces to criticize industry efforts. Focus media attention on antis' extremism. Anticipate and blunt antis' strongest points.
Evaluation of YSP Initiatives

"All of our efforts include a research component to measure their effectiveness"

“The work will be evaluated both qualitatively and quantitatively on its ability to impact a more favourable view of Philip Morris, as well as against several other measures that are currently part of an ongoing image tracking study”

(Roper Organisation, 2001)

“Determine community awareness of initiatives and implement measures to increase that awareness - On-going/PMI”

(PM Strategic Issues Task Force, 2000)
YSP Strategy

- Voluntary marketing codes
- Youth access programs
- School education
- Introduce ID cards
- Illegal to buy cigarettes
- Educate retailers and juveniles about smoking laws
- Collaborate with government, parents, educators etc.
Access Initiative - *It’s the law*

- Block retail sales to minors
  - retailer education
  - point-of-sale-prominence
  - proof-of-age schemes

  - Stickers, brochures, badges, booklet

“The campaign advised retailers that it is illegal to sell tobacco products to any person under-18 years of age”
(BAT, 1998)

- Effectiveness measured by number of packs distributed
"To address the issue of juvenile smoking, governments should be looking to introduce ID cards, make it illegal to buy cigarettes, enforce existing legislation, educate retailers and juveniles about the existing laws, and introduce a uniform selling/purchasing age of 18," said Mr Brady.

"Juveniles smoke to look and act rebellious according to government sponsored research, so the more restrictions, the more rebellious they will look." continued Mr Brady.

(Brendan Brady, CEO Tobacco Institute Australia, 1995)
Allies

Mr Stanton said that community-wide prohibitions were expensive to enforce and were not the way to achieve a reduction in juvenile smoking.

"Secondly, deterrents aimed at juveniles need to be put in place. After all, it is the who seek the cigarettes in the first place, and in this respect we call on the Minister for Health to take positive action.

"Surely, we can come up with something whereby retailers and one in five adult Western Australians are not penalised for the actions of these irresponsible juveniles," he added.

(Bob Stanton, WA Tobacco Retailers’ Association media release 1995)
Education - *I’ve got the Power*

- Kevin Donnelly (Education Strategies Melbourne)
- Philip Morris Australia (PMA)
- Targeted at Year 7-9 students
- Launched in 1998 and distributed to ~1,500 schools
- Providing Philip Morris access to youth research regarding smoking trends
“We never intended this to be a health program but we believe we have a contribution to make to the issue of underage smoking” (Philip Morris, 1999)
Marketing to Youth

– Flavoured cigarettes
– Point-of-sale
– Packaging
– Internet exposure
– Product placement in games and movies
– Fashion
– Music festivals
Don’t be Box’d-In!

Why settle for a half-way method?

Come all the way up to Kool!

To reach the "youth market" a little change: the illustrated figure could be a delightful sort of his present brand and looking for something with better taste. Flower. This could be possibly used on bill boards in the areas where Selon box and Marlboro Master Box are advertised. A Daily

(Brown and Williamson)
Packaging

“we will need to become more creative, more imaginative and more self-sufficient in the skills of image-building, communications and persuasion, through the media still available to us and by unconventional means where necessary.”

(BAT, 1978)

“Opportunities in packaging innovation
Key lessons learned
Especially young adult consumers are ready for change in packaging”

(Philip Morris, 1992)
Point of Sale

“The right to place material at point of sale is an important commercial freedom and should not be prohibited unless there is clear evidence of a demonstratable and substantial benefit to justify its removal”

“Not only may a complete advertising ban fail to reduce juvenile consumption, it may actually increase it by reinforcing the status of smoking as a badge of rebellion amongst juveniles”

(WD & HO Wills, 1995)
Product Placement

“To extend the law to prohibit the appearance of cigarettes and/or smoking in movies or television is very dangerous. To eliminate them from historical dramas would be to rewrite history. To eliminate them from contemporary dramas would be to ignore an integral part of the lives of millions of Australians”

“There have been instances of Philip Morris international paying for product placement. However, each occurred before the formal implementation of the above policy”

(Philip Morris, 1996)
I've made a date to meet with Hugh Nelson of 20th Century Fox on Wednesday morning, January 11th at 9:00 a.m. in my office.

The subject will be the placement of PM U.S.A. cigarette brands in Fox films. As you know, 20th Century has created a new merchandising division which is selling product placement in Fox films -- and already has an agreement with Miller for placement of Miller's brands.

I'm sending copies of this memo to Stan and Paul -- and have discussed it with Charlie Pomerantz.

(Philip Morris, 1984)
In the Movies

Product Placement
1983 – Dark Crystal; Return of the Jedi
1984 – Ghostbusters
1985 – E.T.
1988 – Crocodile Dundee II
1989 – The Little Mermaid
1990 – Pretty Woman
1994 – The Mask; Mrs Doubtfire
1996 – The Rock
1997 – My Best Friend’s Wedding; Con Air
1999 – Inspector Gadget; Toy Story II
2000 – X Men; Charlie’s Angels; Meet the Parents
2001 – The Mummy Returns; Monsters Inc
2002 – Lord of the Rings
2005 – Spongebob Squarepants
2010 – Avatar; Wolfman; Edge of Darkness

(Image from coffee and cigarettes, 2003)
(2) Business Week (October 9, 1989) reports that Philip Morris has agreed with Driver Seat Inc. to sponsor a “high tech amusement park ride” that simulates a racing car. Please provide any agreement or correspondence between any employee or agent of Philip Morris Companies Inc. (including any of its foreign or domestic subsidiaries) and any company (including but not limited to Driver Seat Inc.) developing or making amusement rides.

(3) The Medical Journal of Australia (March 5, 1983) reports that Marlboro billboards were being displayed in a video race car game made by Namco Ltd. of Japan and sold in Australia and that a Marlboro executive said that Marlboro knew about this use of the Marlboro name and logo. Please supply all agreements and correspondence written since January 1, 1980 between any employee or agent of Philip Morris Companies Inc. (including any of its foreign or domestic subsidiaries) and any person (including but not limited to Namco Ltd. or any of its subsidiaries or agents) relating to the use of the Marlboro logo in video games used either in amusement parks or in homes in either the United States or any foreign country.
Fashion

“Establish closer associations with fashion houses, shops, models and fashion parades and encourage their use openly for our products” (WD & HO Wills report, 1976)

(Photos from Cancer Council NSW)
Music Festivals

5. The Power of Music

Benson & Hedges Golden Tones continued to prove its success through 1997, resulting in increased ASU 30 share in Australia, UAE, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, PNG and of course Nigeria. Music has strong ASU 30 appeal and is language that is well understood by our core target group all over the world.

Exploitation of music has been a key factor and has been integral in the planning of live events in Nigeria (concerts, road shows and Horeca events), South Africa (concerts), Malaysia (Horeca events), Australia (Horeca events), Papua New Guinea (concerts & road shows), UAE (concerts) and La Reunion (Horeca events). These events have proved even more successful when fully exploited through the line particularly in markets with few advertising restrictions. Music has played a role in rejuvenating brand image and has led to increased trial and adoption among ASU 30(Nigeria, UAE and PNG are examples).

Recognition of the power of music to attract ASU 30 and drive brand image younger has led to an increase in markets wishing to use music. An exciting initiative was taken when a Nigeria based music star Ras Kimono was exported to Papua New Guinea. The event was a resounding success and was exploited both in PNG and the artist’s home country. This was a first for Nigeria and the PR value for Benson & Hedges was incredible. This initiative opened a door in regard to the progress of Golden Tones activity by introducing a unique international dimension.

The drive behind music will continue, with emphasis on regional activity and focus on Horeca. Music based initiatives will also be researched in order to better understand how such events drive brand image attributes and achieve brand objectives.

(Benson & Hedges, 1997)
Conclusion

• Tobacco industry marketing to youth
• Strategy: “smoking is only for adults”
  – Youth Smoking Prevention strategies
  – Product type and design
  – Product placement
• Evidence from the documents can be used for further advocacy
Other Resources Used

www.smokinginmovies.com.au

*Unfiltered-a revealing look in today’s tobacco industry.*

Available at www.unfiltered.org
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